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Buckheit, James

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From: eileen mcAliney [mcAliney6@yahoo.com]**Sent:** Friday, May 23, 2008 8:33 AM

To: jrbuckheit@state.pa.us; irrc@irrc.state.pa.us; jrholdes@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com;
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Subject: Opposition to GCA testing

State Board of Education
 333 Market St.
 Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Mr. Buckheit, and State Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the GCAs.

We recently lived 4 years in France, which has long used test results rather than individual choice to determine who gets into the grand ecoles, and from there work in and run all businesses. It is difficult for the french to be creative and think outside the box (except for the visual arts, and even then probably the less formal training the better for the french - even Rodin failed the entrance exam to the ecole des beaux arts 3 times, the max tries allowed, and thus never got in... a fact to which his new style is attributed, since it is thought the rigid beaux arts methods would have made his innovation difficult if not impossible)

We observed that many americans working temporarily in france would never have gotten to their high level of achievement if they had been to french schools, because they would have early-on been shunted into the restaurant schools (to become waiters) or bakers, etc (because of their less than stellar performance on american SATs, grades,etc...)... The american system, as it is, with varieties of experiences and learning emphasis allows individuals to blossom who would be otherwise be held down by standardized tests.

As much as there may be a temptation to think that one committee can choose the right questions that should be asked on a standardized exam, this is NOT the case in reality (so many jokes about the results of something designed by a committee) and would only serve to decrease american freedoms.

I hope you can help prevent this binding of the american young minds.

I am opposed because GCAs will not be provided in a format that meets the needs of diverse learners. I am opposed because we already test our students in math, reading and science through the state PSSA exams. I am opposed to double testing of our students. I am opposed because students in our district are already reaching proficiency in reading, math, and science either through the PSSA exams or through a comprehensive, local assessment. I am opposed because GCAs do not test our students on relevant 21st century skills, and valuable class time will have to be diverted to prepare students to take these additional tests.

Sincerely,

Eileen McAliney

2429 Dickson Lane, Malvern PA 19355 (Tredyffrin/Easttown resident)

5/23/2008